

LONG ISLAND FORUM



News from California

Painting of the Gold Rush Era by William S. Mount

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LETTERS FROM FORUM READERS

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Statement

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The name and address of the publisher and editor is Paul Bailey, Amityville, N. Y.

There are no bondholders, mortgagees, or other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities.

Paul Bailey, Owner

Sworn to before this 24th day of September, 1958.

Hugo C. Waldau

Notary Public, Suffolk County

My commission expires

March 30, 1959.

The Name of Calverton

A query as to how the village of Calverton in Riverhead town got its name brought several responses. Mrs. Edith Nugent Carter of Center Moriches writes in part:

"I was raised in Calverton, lived there till I was married in 1903, then in Manorville till 1944 and now in Center Moriches. I have always been told that Calverton received its name from a man named Calvert who lived there. * * * I understand he lived in Manorville around 80 years or more ago; then moved to Calverton".

J. Francis Magee of Riverhead writes that "in one of the old atlases I recall seeing the name of Ann Calvert - - - store". Mr. Magee tells of finding a deed to Ann Calvert from Nathaniel Edwards, his wife, and another woman in Liber 146 page 453, dated and recorded in Sept. 1897, describing property in what is now Calverton. Mr. Magee tells also of two old deeds previously referring to this area, or a part thereof as Buchananville. He recalls that Pelletreau's History of Long Island, under Riverhead, page 401, mentions Buchananville as a village of 200 population.



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As to Mr. Possum

Julian Denton Smith

ONE day in driving to and from Mattituck I counted nine hairy smears on the road — probably opossums. They had been run over, squashed and flattened out. It reminded me of the way turtles fared on our highways about ten years ago and I wonder if we managed to kill off all Long Island turtles at that time.

My first experience with an opossum was in our hen house over in Seaford. We raised New Hampshire Reds. One night a terrible commotion broke loose in the chicken coop. I grabbed my flashlight and single-barreled shotgun and took a look. Mr. Possum was dining on one of our flock. A shot finished him. I had never seen a possum before and had to ask neighbors what the thing was. One neighbor lugged it home and his family had possum next day for dinner. They had to pick out shot as I sprayed the animal generously.

In gathering material for this article the small print in my dictionary offered the following quotation:

"An Opossum hath a head like a Swine, a tail like a Rat, and is of the bigness of a Cat. Under the belly shee hath a bagge." John Smith. *Virginia*, vol. 1, sixth voyage, p. 124.

Upon further research I came across an addition to the above: "Wherein shee lodgeth, carrieth, and sucketh her young." John Smith certainly knew his possum for his description is almost Biblical in its accuracy, brevity and completeness.

Opossum is nothing new as an inhabitant of this world. He has, in fact, been here about 70 million years and with barely any changes in all that time. Another unchanged old-timer is the horseshoe crab — he has been on the earth about 300 million years. It seems natural to expect any creature with such longevity to have a very definite and important place in the scheme of things. It is, however, most difficult to justify the existence of either the opossum or the horseshoe crab. Surely Long Island

life would not be altered the slightest if neither creature were present.

We are all familiar with church dinners centering around chicken, turkey, pot roast and even clam chowder. How many can recall when a church dinner had opossum as the featured item? We need go back only three generations to find the custom. The good ladies always prepared enough opossum so everyone could have seconds.

I have derived no end of pleasure and fun out of inveigling relatives, friends and acquaintances into admitting they have eaten possum and giving a description of it. I gather that a cult has sprung up in which possum eating is taboo, and if you do eat it you must never tell of it. I am reminded of the Jewish aversion to pork — it is not in the ritual. Yet I have been with a group when some of my Jewish friends got pork juice from ear to ear. After they had concluded their gluttony, they crossed themselves and swore the stuff had been bull!

The consensus is that opossum tastes like chicken, turkey and pork. One woman admits adding chopped possum to a chicken salad when the supply of chicken had been slightly underestimated. No one was the wiser. Another claims she has fed

her family opossum and told them it was pork. They accepted it as such. It seems to me I must have eaten some of that chicken-possum salad for I am sure I was at that party!

Everyone seems to agree that opossum should be dehaired before roasting or baking and the inside should be packed with onions and white potatoes. Sweet potatoes or yams should be served with the possum. I cannot get anyone to say that the onions and white potatoes are eaten. It seems their purpose is to remove a certain wild, gamey flavor that sometimes is evident. The sweet potatoes, however, are a must.

Opossum should make excellent barbeque as there is a great amount of fat to run out of the meat and drip free. While oven roasting, the carcass should be on a rack so it will cook dry.

Notwithstanding the steady pressures of civilization the opossum is maintaining and actually extending his range. He lives from coast to coast of the United States and is lately appearing in Canada. His southern limits seem to be Brazil and the Argentine. There is only one variety of opossum in North America — "Didelphia virginiana," the common or Virginia opossum. In South America about two dozen species appear. Some of



A Long Island Possum

them look like mice and flying squirrels, and one kind eats only sea crabs.

If you have ever looked into a pig's mouth you have been surprised at the number of teeth — 44. Opossums can beat that as they have 50 teeth, the most of any North American animal. They do not drink chlorinated waters so the toothache incident must be enormous.

Maybe an opossum would not know when he had a toothache for he is the dumbest creature imaginable! His brain is sadly small when compared to that of a bright animal such as a rat or a cat. An opossum has a half-witted expression magnified by a lackadaisical grin. His black skinned, hairless ears look like they were stuck on. His sheepish, silly smile seems an effort to excuse his lack of smartness. He can be caught over and over again in the same simple trap. He cannot profit by experience nor can he see and prepare for danger. He is plain dumb and only an Act-of-God can account for his survival of 70 million years.

Although we are apt to consider an opossum as a holdover from prehistoric times he possesses one feature associated exclusively with man and apes. The opossum has a thumb. It is an opposable thumb, one that moves in such a way as to touch the tips of all the fingers. Man and apes have the thumb on the hands for grasping and holding objects. The opossum has his thumb on his hind foot — and for what earthly reason is his own state secret.

Another interesting feature of the opossum is the pouch. It is on the order of a kangaroo's. When the young opossums are brought forth, they make their way immediately into the pouch and stay there about two months after which they are big enough to begin running around. They then use the pouch as base of operations. Opossums have two or three litters a year and as many as sixteen may be in a single litter. The newly born are so small that all sixteen can fit in a teaspoon. The youngsters often ride on the mother's back and dangle from her tail. Opossum tails are prehensile, like monkey's, and used for grasping,

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The Brothers Mount

WILLIAM and Shepard Mount, generally recognized as Long Island's greatest native artists, with brothers Henry and Robert and a sister Ruth, were the offsprings of Thomas and Julia Mount of Setauket where the children were born in a farmhouse which Thomas also used as post office and stage-stop. Following his death in 1814, thirteen years after marriage, the widow and children moved to Stony Brook to reside with her father, Jonas Hawkins who until his death in 1817 used his home as post office, store and tavern. This home, erected some fifteen years before the Revolution by Jonas's father, Major Eleazer Hawkins Jr., is now known as the Mount house, one of

Effie Bacon Jones

Stony Brook's famous historic buildings.

Although as they grew up Henry and William Mount became sign-painters, Robert a harness-maker and Shepard a carriage-maker, all except Robert who stuck to his trade soon turned to art. About 1826 the other three entered the National Academy of Design and here demonstrated the rare talent which was to bring them popular acclaim. Henry, the oldest, now known chiefly for his excellent landscapes and doorways, early returned to Stony Brook to farm, and there he died in 1841.

William and Shepard survived him by twenty-seven years and ac-

quired much wider recognition, the one for his landscapes, episodes and portraits with pencil as well as brush; the other chiefly for portraits. Mainly for its variety and greater popular appeal, the work of William is now better known. Endowed with a buoyant jocularly which enabled him to portray persons and doings through humorous eyes, William Sidney Mount was bound to make and hold many friendly contacts.

William and Shepard Alonzo Mount remained closely associated with the island of their birth. The former at the height of his career returned to Stony Brook and set up a studio in the attic of the Mount house. From here he would drive about the north shore in a



SPEARING EELS. PAINTED BY WILLIAM S. MOUNT

studio on wheels, which strange horse-drawn contraption was frequently seen parked beside a road or on the waterfront at Port Jefferson and nearby communities.

Faithful to his art though he was, William Mount, like his uncle Micah Hawkins who composed America's first native opera, loved music. Here his humor had full sway as he sawed the fiddle or tooted the tiny whistle, both of his own making, to enliven a neighborhood gathering. That he also indulged in fishing is surmised from his having joined the South Side Club at Great River.

Brief mention such as this does little justice to the greatness of the Mount brothers. There are those who believe that had Henry lived his fame might well have equaled that of the others. At his death the National Academy paid him honors. But neither he nor Shepard possessed the personality which endeared William to the world which came to know his work.

Shepard who married Elizabeth Elliot of Sag Harbor and spent some years there died September 8, 1868, while William died one month and a day later at the home of brother Robert in East Setauket.



A Sketch by William S. Mount

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It is William whom Jacqueline Overton, a leading authority, called "the most loyal artist the Island has ever known."

A special exhibit of the works of William Sidney Mount is now being held at the Suffolk Museum at Stony Brook in observance of the 90th anniversary of his death — November 19, 1868.

The Museum has a world-famous permanent exhibit of Mount's paintings but the current exhibit is augmented by special Mount memorabilia including: his violin, music, music stand, diaries, journals and some documents never before exhibited.

Before William Sidney Mount's

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Robinson Invented Ball Bearings

OF a truth, when one digs back into Long Island history we come up with some real surprises, and while this item was common talk in Bellport from about 1860 to 1900, it is still impressive.

Mr. Oliver Hazard Perry Robinson, a wise man, small of stature, alert in action, ever keen in perception, a carpenter and fine citizen, was born October 7th, 1813 in Manorville, Long Island, son of John and Naomi Robinson. He married Miss Charlotte E. Brown of Bellport, on October 25th, 1833 and built their home on South Country Road in that village.

One day in the fall of about 1862, he was in his shop loading buckshot into cheese cloth bags to drop into the barrels of his muzzle-loader shotgun—as he was to go to the beach with Daniel Petty for ducks that morning. Well, in came a woman asking him to cut out an ironing board for her.

In a hurry, he sawed a piece from a pine plank and tossed the sawed-off end onto the bench and it shot lightly over the length of the bench and broke a window beyond. "There", said Mr. Robinson, "no ducks today!" Then he queried, "why did that board fly so lightly over my bench?" He picked it up, laid it on the bench, moved it with his hand back and forth with ease, then found he had spilled shot on the bench top and they rolled the board. Now Mr. Robinson's good head came into play. He stayed at home and applied the mechanical ease in motion which he had discovered to a practical use.

He began work on a wheel hub which would roll on balls between the hub box and the axle. He went through a series of trials, some with rollers and balls, some with space literally filled with balls, but it all resolved into deciding that balls alone were the best if confined by large washers on axle at both ends of hub. The washers were held by large nuts on the axles. This worked, Mr. Robinson had balls cast, and in 1866, March 13th, under number 53,186, he received his patent.

In those years castings were rough, and to do the metal finishing

Capt. Wilbur A. Corwin

of balls by hand was prohibitive. He met up with numerous discouragements, but he made hubs and wheels in their entirety. Finally he built a cart to carry lumber five times the load one could carry on plain greased axles with smooth boxes, with less than one-half the effort.

Mr. Robinson then made a four-wheeled velocipede which he used to ride about the village, and when 83 years of age he used to make an almost daily appearance on our streets. But it was the cart which carried a heavy load with such ease in pushing or pulling that proved the practicability of ball bearings in hubs.

Mr. Oliver Hazard Perry Robinson, now with his ownership of a practical invention which would revolutionize vehicles of all descriptions and for all uses, set out on an extended study to learn where, if possible, he could find facilities to put ballbearings into production.

He was advised that making metal balls in those days of primitive machining too much would have to be done by hand dressing to bring the manufacturing price within the range of the customer's ability to pay for a finished product.

But though discouraged, the inventor would not give up. We who remember him know of, and saw, his small sample hub made in its entirety by him; we also saw his cart and the velocipede ridden by him for many years about our village. He further made from a substantial oak family armchair of the early 1700's, by adding his make of wheels, a comfortable conveyance to carry Mrs. Robinson in calling upon her neighbors—a real source of joy to her.

Oliver Hazard Perry Robinson, born in 1813, and probably named for Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry of Lake Erie fame in the war of 1812, told me that as he owned his invention and so many usable models, he was going to sit tight. Then, as this world was moving ahead, some day he would come into his own, backed by his patents.

I know that eventually Mrs. Walstein Robinson, the inventor's daughter-in-law, had stored in the attic of her home on Brown's Lane in Bellport, the wooden velocipede armchair, the original miniature ballbearing hub and, in fact, everything connected with the ballbearing patent, including Mr. Robinson's drawings and original patent. Just recently I learned that the model of the ballbearing wagon



Inventor Robinson With Ball Bearing Wheels

wheels which were stored there were sold to Henry Ford and placed in his museum.

The photo used in this article was loaned me by Judge Donald W. Shaw of Bellport, great-grandson of the inventor. Mrs. Ida Bronson, daughter of Mrs. Walstein Robinson, of Upper Darby, Pa., has a photo of Mr. Robinson on his four-wheel velocipede with his son Walstein, his grand-daughter Ida (now Mrs. Ida R. Bronson) and his great-grandson Kenneth E. Davis, at four years of age, on his tricycle.

Mr. Davis, an outstanding citizen of East Hampton, is the son of Eugene S. Davis and Irene Robinson Davis, daughter of John B. Robinson, son of O. H. P. Robinson, "Inventor of the Ball Bearing".

We are sorry to relate that the inventor never derived any income from his invention. His creative and ingenious mind had planned too far ahead of his fellow men's ability to machine metals sufficiently accurate to make his plan practical.

Mr. Robinson's death came at

Bellport in 1901. He stamped his memory upon me by teaching me to make a frostfish spear from pieces of telegraph wire, inserted fanlike in the end of a light pole. With it I could catch ten frostfish to any other boy's one, just as the great man had promised I could.

The Rock Smith Family

I have just enjoyed reading about "Uncle Valentine" Smith in your September and October issues.

I am always alert for information about the Rock Smith family. Mr. Julian Denton Smith in 1949 gave me information on my line of Smiths which I had been seeking for over 15 years, and this information thru the L. I. Forum.

My interest is because I descended from Rock John Smith; Lieut. Jonathan Smith; Jonathan Smith, Jr.; Henry who married Catherine Denton and came to Orange County in 1765 and settled in Wallkill precinct. The farm was in my family for 185 years. It appears that Henry had three brothers — Jonathan, John and Cornell. I believe Valentine was a son of John. Valentine looks like my grandfather Henry Smith (1815-1864).

I am always looking for articles on the Vails-Rumseys-Denton-Coleman families. I have placed all my papers, etc., in the Goshen Library of which I have been treasurer for some years. It has a historical room containing about 500 letters, etc. pertaining to Orange County history. Harry H. Smith, Goshen, New York.

Pamphlets by the Forum

The Forum has a limited number of the following pamphlets, for sale at \$1 postpaid:

The Talented Mount Brothers, by Jacqueline Overton.

Long Island's First Italian, 1639, by Judge Berne A. Pyrke.

L. I. FORUM INDEX

The Queens Borough Public Library sells a complete index of the Long Island Forum for the years 1938-1947 inclusive, at \$1 postpaid. Also for the years 1948-1952 inclusive, at 50 cents postpaid. They may be obtained by writing to the Long Island Collection, Queens Borough Public Library, 89-14 Parsons Boulevard, Jamaica 32, New York.

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Whaler Conklin Wrote Home

WHEN in 1837 the whaling bark Concordia cleared Sag Harbor for a ten months voyage in the south Atlantic, a number of very raw Long Island youths were in the crew. One was James A. Rogers of Bridgehampton who stuck to the sea and became a well known whaling skipper. Another novice on this voyage was Edmund Totten Conklin of East Hampton, who, however, later chose to remain a landsman and became known as East Hampton's village miller. He operated the old Pantigo windmill which stands on the plot occupied by "Home, Sweet Home."

In time Edmund Conklin's son, Aaron Silvanus Conklin, likewise took up milling here with his dad and, like his dad, suddenly decided to take a fling at whaling. So in 1864 he signed up on the bark Union and sailed away, as his dad had done 27 years before, with the same James A. Rogers who was now Captain Jim Rogers, master of the Union.

Aaron Conklin, it seems, had a flare for writing and many were the letters which he sent back to his folks in East Hampton during this voyage which lasted close to four years. In one of his first letters, with the village windmill in mind, he admonished his mother to "Tell Father not to carry too much sail or jam the millstones down too close. That is what he used to tell me when I tended mill."

Young Conklin's letters have been preserved by a daughter, Mrs. Mary E. Bell who, incidentally, was born in Home, Sweet Home, and to whom we are indebted for the following excerpts therefrom:

On Board the Barque Union, 1864

August 22. Came on board the ship and set sail with the wind S.W. Came out in the bay and anchored. Set sail on the 23d. Came around the Point. Green hands all seasick.

August 24. Felt a little better. All hands to work getting the boats ready, coiling rigging in the tubs, etc. Saw a whale off the lee bow. Saw a school of porpoises, struck one and took on board.

H. P. Horton

August 25. Fair weather with the wind to the S.W.

August 26. Rather breezy, sailing under reefed topsails. All hands feeling pretty well. Can't quite stomach the hardtack and salt pork yet.

August 28. Sunday. Nothing to do today but read and spin yarns. The Captain came forward and gave bibles to all hands that hadn't any. Stood my first trick to the wheel today.

Sept. 9. I tell you what it is, father, I never knew what home was before. I have seen the time that I would have given everything I possessed to just set my foot on Long Island.

I would give a dollar now for a quart jug full of water out of our well. The water aboard of our ship is not fit to drink anyway. I heard the mate say he never saw such poor water put on board of a ship before. And the hard-bread that we have to eat is some that this ship had in her last voyage.

It looks like a long voyage to look thirty months ahead.

You will have to direct letters to St. Catherine and Honolulu both.

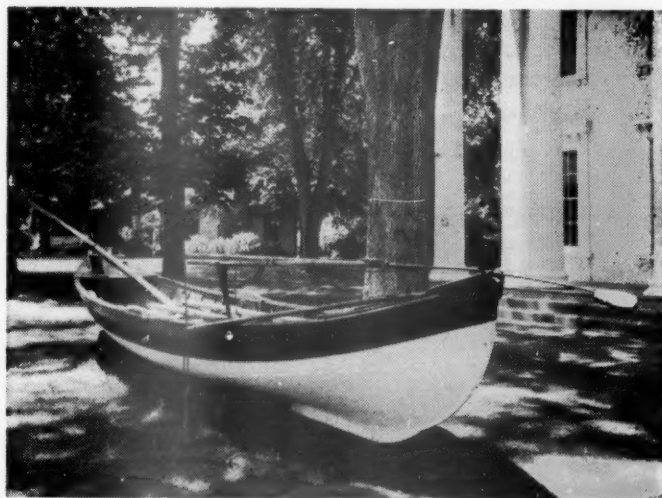
Then we shall be sure to get one or the other.

Sunday, Sept. 11. It is my watch on deck but there is no wind and nothing to do so I will try to write a little just to pass away the time. I can't say I like whaling very much, although I don't suppose I have been here long enough to know yet.

It is some fun, though, to get fast to them and have them cart you; it is something like riding an iceboat. The first time that we lowered away, our boat got right into the school of whales. They were so thick around the boat at one time that I could not get my oar in the water for a long while, just like a school of porpoises, two along side of the boat at one time so near that I could put my hand on them. Some of the fellows stuck their eyes out. I tell you! They thought they were gone, sure pop.

If there is any time that I feel homesick it is Sunday, when I think of going down to the beach with Ed and Abe (his brother and cousin) and taking a good swim, and then to haul all the things out of my chest and look at them and think where I was when I

Continued on page 212



Whaleboat at Sag Harbor's Whaling Museum

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"Uncle Jesse" Conklin

The recently completed bank building on the corner of Woodbury Avenue and Main Street occupies a plot of ground which has written some of Huntington's early history. Bounded by the streets formerly known as "South Bowery" and the "Path to Oysterbay", it is almost opposite the location where, in 1838 young Walter Whitman started a newspaper venture which has grown to be one of the largest weeklies in the country.

Perhaps the greatest honor to come to that corner was when it became the home site of another of Huntington's well remembered citizens, "Uncle Jesse" Conklin. "Uncle Jesse" is not remembered for his accumulation of wealth, but he is remembered for having given a lifetime of service to the community in which he lived. Every weekday he arose early enough to do his stable chores, brush, curry, feed and harness his team to the stage which left Main Street with passengers at six A. M. His destination was Syosset, the nearest point of the railroad cars, and he would return with anyone who wished to come to Huntington. He performed this service for a small fee until Monday, January 13th, 1898 when the railroad was extended to Northport at Washington Street. Then the enterprising "Uncle Jesse" took a contract with the post office department to meet the "cars" and carry the mail from the Station to the Village.

Perhaps the inspiration in his work came from his wife, Eliza Jane, for apparently they were very devoted and lived for one another. It was she who helped him over the many rough spots in his career, and seldom do we find those who are so devoted that life becomes meaningless when left alone.

Our vital statistics hold the following illuminating record: Died, May 1st 1895, Eliza Jane Conklin; Died, May 3rd 1895, Jesse Conklin, Mail Carrier.

No longer do we find the stage-coach nor the old home with its picket fence and apple orchard; with the curtains so neatly hung by Eliza; and the "parlor" shades drawn to keep the sun from the "company" furniture. But the man who did his life's work without fanfare, and was buried the same day as his devoted consort in a dual funeral, left behind him a memory of times when folks served their community without selfish

Continued Next Page

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aspirations: a memory which still lingers many decades later.

The subject of this short narrative was a descendant of the original Conklin family in Huntington and his ancestry included names of those mentioned as heroes during the Revolutionary War.

When you go into the bank which stands on that historic corner, think for a moment (as you note the impressive marble interior) of the days when our history makers laid the foundation for our town.

—Roy E. Lott, Huntington Town Historian.

Remembers Water Island

Two letters recently in the Forum interested me quite a bit by Louise Budd Edwards. In them she mentions Water Island, a little beach resort opposite Patchogue. In 1893, and few years later, on Sundays one or more of the bay boats from Great River would take a party of the young and older to Water Island for the day. I was then a growing boy of some size and I always went. It was about an hour's sail, the wind was southwest, favorable both coming and going.

I remember the hotels there, but the great attraction was an iron tanker, of German registry, called the Gluckauf. She came ashore I believe in March 1893 and was high and dry on the beach just east of the hotels. She remained thus a good many years, but was finally bought and broken up for scrap iron. I have seen pictures of her many times, I think at one time in the Forum some years back.

James E. Tooker
Babylon Town Historian

Miss Strong's 20th Pamphlet

Recently published by the Long Island Forum is Miss Kate W. Strong's 20th pamphlet containing another group of her "True Tales from the Early Days of Long Island". It sells at \$1 postpaid and may be obtained by addressing Miss Strong's home, "The Cedars", Strong's Neck, Setauket. The edition is limited.

Many of Miss Strong's previous pamphlets are now out of issue, and in some cases are considered collectors' items.

I sure look forward to my copy of the Forum each month as it is always so interesting. I never want to be without it. Mrs. Jennie Byrne, Patchogue.

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Continued from page 209

put them there — and those card pictures too, how I love to look at them, although it makes me feel so bad. I showed them to the boys forward and asked them which was the prettiest girl among them and they pointed at my sister. Ask Sarah what she thinks of that.

We are within about two or three days sail of the Cape Verde Islands now if we have a fair wind. I hope we shall be there pretty soon, for I want to get something fit to eat. If there is any fruit there, I will have my bunk full, I'll bet you. I guess I fare as well as any of the foremast hands, for the Boatsteerers cook and I are all good friends. And if there is any soft tack, cake or pie aft, I gets my piece you know.

I was to the wheel the other

night and a fellow came there and gave me a chunk of cake as big as your two fists.

We have killed two sperm whales that made about ten barrels apiece and we picked up a three barrel cask and that makes us twenty-three barrels of sperm oil, *only three weeks out.*

Mr. Penny is death on a whale, I tell you. I am in his boat and pull the midship oar. He killed both of the whales. The first one that we got, when he darted his lance into him, he killed him just as quick as you could kill a bird with a stone. He rolled over just as soon as the lance struck him. He never spouted a drop of blood. He killed him so quick that he did not know whether he was dead or not at first. But as soon as he saw he *was*, he turned around to me

and said, "Aaron, give us a chaw of tobacco."

Note To Sister Sarah

Oh how often do I think of you and all the rest of my dear friends. Sarah, this is a hard life to lead. If you could only come down in the forecandle once and see us eating dinner it would make you stick your nose up higher than you ever did before. I can't think of anything but a lot of hogs eating out of a trough.

April 21, 1865. We came into St. Catherine day before yesterday. We have got 275 bbls. of oil, eight months out tomorrow, 255 of sperm and 20 of whale. We have

Continued next page

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Continued from page 212
killed nine whale and picked up one dead one and I pray the Lord that we may never see another. I'd rather help kill six live whales.

We are going to send our oil home in the Washunk of New Bedford. She is going to leave here in a week or two.

I am pretty well contented now. I can get away with my share of pork and hardtack now. Don't eat less than 1/2 lb. of fat pork to a meal. I have got over homesickness, sea-sickness and other diseases of the kind and I have staid home from upstreet so long that I don't think much about that either.

Have Abe and Ed been on Montauk yet? How many geese did they get? I would like to be there just to show them how to shoot a little bit, although I am pretty well contented where I am. I like whaling much better than I did when I wrote to you before. I like to get fast to a whale and I am never any better suited than when I am up to my eyes and ears in grease, or up to my elbows in tar. Have

not been stove but once yet. We worked all day one Sunday to fix a boat and early Monday morning, Mr. Wright Whale made kindling wood of it. He came right up under the boat and run his nose against her side, then he breached on top of her and broke her right in two in the middle—never hurt a man! We picked up half of the boat and let the other half go; saved all of the craft, etc.

We had one man die about two months ago—one that we shipped from the Cape de Verde Islands. I never want to see another man buried at sea so long as I am here! It is a solemn thing, I tell you, to see a man hauled out of the fore-castle like a dog—sew him up in a bag and pitch him overboard. We didn't have any swearing aboard the ship for a long time after that.

There has not been a day—nay hardly an hour in a day but what I thought of you all and all of my dear friends and of the good old times I used to have at home.

Mother, I would like to walk

into your pantry now. I'll bet I would find a piece of pie in there. Never mind, I get a little once in awhile out here. The cook and steward made me a great big pie out of the blackberries you gave me when I came away, and it was tall. I stew a mess of them once in awhile when I feel like eating something good.

We have pretty good living now we are in port;—fresh beef twice a day, soft bread and potatoes;—and with oranges we fare pretty well.

From Brazil

April 21, 1865. Father, I wish you and mother and all the rest of us could be here in Brazil a little while just to get some good oranges and bananas. Mother, if you were only here you might go to the trees and pick lemons enough for you to make pies for six years without paying a cent for it.

Written To His Brother

May 8, 1865. Ed, I have seen the old ship stand up strait on her end as ever you saw Nat Dominy's old fish boat—and I have

Continued on next page

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Continued from Page 213

seen her roll so that she took in water over both rails. She is a plaguesy old thing to roll, I tell you!

July 22, 1866. One day we got three whales, one for each boat. I was in the mate's boat at the time. Once we got the boat aground right on top of the whale's back and could not get off for quite a while. Just after we got clear from him, he rolled over and over so that the iron poles that were fast to him went round like millarms!

From St. Helena

March 31, 1867. We have not done much this season; got 850 bbls. all told. You will have to come down to Sag Harbor after me in a fish cart when I get there for I don't expect to have money enough to get home any other way. The other day I reckoned up how much my voyage came to, and how many days we had been out and put it on an average, and how much do you think I have made a day? I have made just nine cents a day from the time I left home—big pay for these hard times!

Continued from Page 204

coiling around and holding objects. Many snakes, too, are this way.

Opossum live in dens. They journey usually at night in search of food. They are like bears and crows in that they can eat anything — vegetable or animal and often it does not matter whether alive or dead. Opossum love to wander on a warm, wet, foggy summer evening. Then they make little noise on dead leaves and the vision of natural enemies and prey is dimmed.

Many of the wild animals hibernate in winter. This is not so of the opossum. Their activities are reduced in winter and this indicates they are falling back on their accumulations of fat for sustenance. They winter in their dens and forage about during mild spells.

No more than passing comment should be given the opossum's ability to act dead — "play possum". Whether it is a wilful action of last resort or the result of fright seems of individual interpretation. Probably our best animal men are not yet sure about this, their opinions do not seem of accord.

I have heard tell of a young man catching an opossum, splitting a small pole, and passing the tail through the split. The animal did his part by securely wrapping his tail around the pole and hanging limply, feigning dead, while being carried home for cooking.

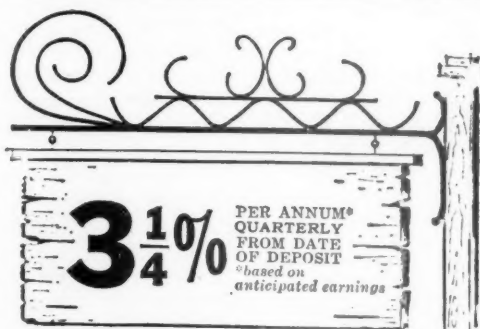
Opossum fur has long been used in the apparel industry. At the present time trappers sell a little more than one million possum furs annually.

I guess that between the trappers and the automobiles the opossum population is pretty well held in

check. But how can you beat something that can produce sixteen offspring at a clip and do it three times a year!

Great River's Great Trees

November is a good month to visit the Bayard Cutting Arboretum at Great River. In these 643 acres, one time estate of the William Bayard Cutting family which deeded it to the people of the State, through the L. I. State Park Commission, are five interesting nature walks. The Arboretum is open daily from 9 a.m. till dark.



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Hudson River Oysters

I enjoyed reading that article in the September issue by Ralph S. Abrams entitled "Bluepointers Oystered Up-Hudson". I recall when it was quite a usual thing for Long Islanders to transplant Sing Sing oysters in the Shrewsbury river in New Jersey and other coastal tributaries in order that they would gradually get used to more salt. Only a few years ago, I have heard, West Sayville oystermen transplanted some seed oysters from the Hudson in Great South Bay, but the change from fresh to salt water was too much for them and few if any ever developed to the marketable stage.

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Remembers Steamer Huntington

My old friend of high school days in Huntington, Camillus R. Trainor, gave me a subscription to the Forum and I must say I have read every issue from cover to cover. It brings back old memories. I was very much interested in the picture of the old steamer Huntington in the September number. Many a trip I took on her under Capt. Young.

I particularly remember Admiral Dewey's flagship, the cruiser Brooklyn of Spanish-American War

fame, with a hole in her stack, and also the international cup races when Sir Thomas Lipton was alive. As you may know, my grandfather, Joseph Irwin, was president of the Huntington Transportation Co., so we all had passes and enjoyed many a trip to New York and to South Norwalk, Ct. — C. Russell Irwin, Northport.

The Forum to which we subscribe is habitually referred to in our library. Arthur S. Maynard, Assistant Librarian, The N. Y. Genealogical and Biographical Society, 122-124-126 East 58th Street.

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Little Gull's Keeper Chase

That brief account of "Gull Island's Past" in the October Forum reminded me that many years ago my father told me that although Little Gull Island was only a quarter of an acre in size as compared to Great Gull's seventeen acres "rising fifteen feet and more above sea level", the government decided away back in 1809 that Little Gull was best suited for a lighthouse. My father and others could never understand this as the smaller island had no fresh water supply of its own and regular trips had to be made from there to Great Gull which had a well of very fine water.

I have heard my father speak of some of the keepers at Little Gull, namely Captain Harry Adams and Captain Henry Fields. He used to say, though, that the best known keeper of the isolated lighthouse was "Squire" Frederick Chase who took charge there in 1825 and served in that capacity, I believe, for more than forty years. He died before my father's day, but many anecdotes about Chase, a very religious Seventh Day Adventist, have never died.

His home was at Shelter Island Heights where he owned a very large farm. Besides serving as lighthouse keeper, he held many public offices, including Justice of the Peace and Supervisor in the town of Shelter Island. While serving as keeper he kept a diary of his daily doings. On Great Gull Island part of each year he kept a yoke of oxen which he used for plowing and hauling driftwood. He must have been a very busy man but not so busy but what he fathered nine offspring, among whose descendants have been some very prominent men and women.

A Descendant



Little Gull Lighthouse Before 1938



Left to right — Parks' son, Capt. Harry Adams, Assistants Charles Parks and Harry Griswold. 1880 Photo.

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Continued from page 192

time there had existed a certain feeling among artists that the life they saw around them was not worthy of their high calling. Mount was the first artist to specialize in the American social scene and it was not until he showed his paintings, "The Rustic Dance After the Sleigh Ride" in 1830 and "Dancing on the Barn Floor" in 1831, that the American people realized what they had been missing. It was not only his remarkably good judgment in choosing genre as a specialty but also his high degree of painting talent that marked William off as one of the best artists of his period.

After William's great success, he continued to go ahead with such social scenes as "Winding Up" in 1836, and "Raffling for a Goose" in 1837. Then came something of a let-down and not until 1845 when he painted the still missing picture, "Music is Contagious," and the well known "Eel Spearing," did he show greater progress. On through 1848, when he painted "Boys Caught Napping in a Field" and "Farmer Whetting His Scythe," to the year 1850, when he did "California News," he was still progressing but by that time he had accomplished the best of his genre paintings.

In the 1850's, possibly in the year 1854, he painted his famous landscape, "Long Island Farmhouses." Little of consequence came from his brush after this time for he had practically spent himself and his health was none too good. His last noteworthy genre painting was "Fair Exchange No Robbery" which, although undated, probably was painted about 1865.



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Query re. Clark

In looking over an old autograph album once owned by my great-aunt Althea Howell Tooker Rice, I came across several probable relatives by name of Clark, living I believe in the late 1880's. They were Agnes Gibbs Clark, Annie M. Clark and Mary Bentley Clark. I am wondering how they were related to the Tookers of Long Island. Perhaps some Forum reader might advise me.

You might be interested to know that my Forum is passed on to the University of California at Los Angeles whose librarian is pleased to have it. — Jeannette Ford (Mrs. John W.) Woodruff, 10826 Wilkins Avenue, Los Angeles 24, Cal.

Add Church Deed

The July number of the Forum, which features the Mattituck Presbyterian Church on its cover, was of special interest to me as my direct ancestor, Capt. James Reeve, gave the land on which it stands.

The original deed, in excellent condition, is in the safe deposit box of the church, in the North Fork Bank and Trust Company in Mattituck. It is dated "The fifteenth day of June, 1715" and was witnessed by Henry Tuthill and "be-

fore me, Benjamin Young, Justice."

These two names are, like Reeve, familiar ones in these parts, and are probably direct ancestors of some of your readers.

Mrs. Luke V. Bermingham

A Big Boarder

According to Ira J. Friedman, Port Washington's well known bookdealer, Harry Hertzberg of circus fame once boarded an elephant at the home of a friend in Freeport. Mr. Hertzberg, who died in 1943, was known far and wide for his kindness to circus animals and circus people who needed help. Having made a collection of circus literature and other items connected with circus life, he left this material to the San Antonio (Texas) Public Library where it is preserved as the Harry Hertzberg Circus Collection. Mr. Leonard V. Farley, "Museum Librarian", writes us that many Long Islanders have visited the Circus Collection in which are preserved items connected with the careers of one time Long Islander P. T. Barnum and other circus people.

I am writing to ask if you have in your files any picture of the old Cooper House at Quogue. Mrs. S. L. Searles, Hampton Bays. (Can some reader help? Editor).

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Ethel Traphagen on TV

Herb Sheldon, on his popular TV show, was a gracious host to the Traphagen School of Fashion, with Ethel Traphagen, director and founder of the school, as guest of honor. Miss Traphagen, who is shown in the illustration (inset) with Mr. Sheldon, was surrounded by her students past and present ... "a great lady" as her celebrated graduate and program guest, Helen Lee, called her. The two girls with Herb in the picture are of the current crop; Kathy Scupp (left) models a 1925 chemise by Lanvin from the Traphagen Museum Collection — a style which was the grandmother of today's loosened mode; a current dress (seen at right), a more shapely evolution of the eased style, is an international project among students at Traphagen — designed by a young man of Italian descent, Vincent Rocco, made by another young man from Cyprus, Mimis Charalambous, and worn here by Ann Puhlovich from Jugoslavia.

Miss Lee recalled the days when she first came to New York to study at Traphagen, then as now in its high-ceilinged studios at 1680 Broadway near 52nd Street. As a pupil there she won a contest with her children's clothes designs and the school sold others to manufacturers — the start of her career.



She is now children's wear's first lady of design, winner of this fall's 1958 Neiman-Marcus Award, and already a holder of Coty's American Fashion Critics' Award. Miss Lee has no problems with the latest fashions for, as she pointed out, the short waist, the long waist, and the trapeze are children's fashions first, last and always, and she likes to dress children in clothes that reflect but never copy grown-up styles.

Mr. Sheldon, like so many other men, went on record as opposed to "sacks" of any sort.

Suffolk County's first Baptist Church was built at Coram in 1747. It stood for one full century.

Suffolk Museum

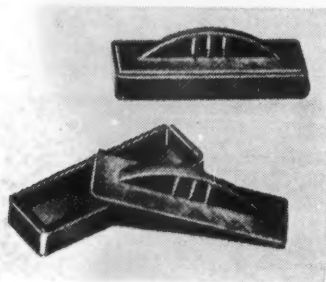
The Suffolk Museum at Stony Brook, L. I., will be open Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 4, and Veterans Day, Tuesday, Nov. 11 but not, however, on Thanksgiving Day, November 27. - Ordinarily the Museums are open daily, except Mondays and Tuesdays from 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

Roslyn's Clock Tower

Glad Mr. Neal Ashby told about Roslyn's imposing Clock Tower in his story (An Historic Nassau Strip) in the October L. I. Forum. I have often wondered as to its background. (Mrs.) Valentie Hawkins, East Meadow.

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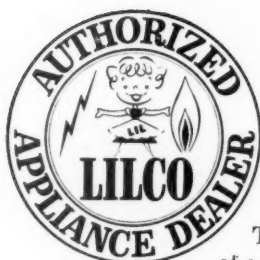
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Roslyn Suicide's Secret

The village of Roslyn has its tale of buried treasure. It dates back to the Revolution. Following the defeat of the American army in Brooklyn in the summer of 1776, when numerous local Patriots fled across the Sound to Connecticut, British troops moved in, one healthy Roslyn farmer sought an even more distant refuge by hanging himself from a rafter in the old log barn. But before doing so he is said to have buried his plantable riches here and there about the farm without informing his family of the whereabouts. And when the family was threatened with torture by British foragers for failing to reveal the caches, it likewise slipped away to Connecticut.

Convinced that the family had managed to take the treasure along, the British abandoned their search and called the incident closed. But not so local Tories who, enjoying a freedom of movement not accorded their Patriot neighbors, de-

voted much time throughout the war excavating on the abandoned farm.

After peace was restored in 1783 and most local Tories had moved away, Patriot residents continued the search and for many years, although title to the farm changed hands several times, digging for treasure was an almost nightly occurrence there.

Sometime after the War of 1812 a new owner established a stage-stop tavern on the farm, which was within easy walking distance of the colonial homestead of village miller Henry Onderdonk. It was at the Onderdonk home, later known as the Washington Tavern, that President George Washington and party breakfasted one April morning in 1790.

On that occasion, according to local tradition, Mr. Onderdonk, after showing the distinguished visitors his papermill, the earliest in the State, took them to the stage-stop tavern to hear the story of the buried treasure from the tavernkeeper. There is also a story that the famous poet-editor William Cullen Bryant, who located in Roslyn during the 1840's on a beautiful estate known as Cedar-mere, having heard of the long and fruitless search for the buried treasure, encouraged his farm-hands to spend their evenings out behind the tavern digging for money rather than in its hospitable taproom, spending it.

One tale told is of the tavern-keeper having once announced a public springtime treasure hunt behind the tavern, with free refreshments for all shovellers. Described as a gala occasion, no part of the buried fortune was unearthed, but the grounds were left in prime condition for planting which the tavernkeeper proceeded to do the next day.

But although, as far as known, no treasure has ever been found

on the premises, more than one excavator has been rewarded for his pains with arrowheads, paint-pots and other Indian relics. As a matter of fact, according to historian Harry W. Lowerre of nearby Port Washington, one local woman with archaeological leanings managed to build up a very fine collection of aboriginal artifacts while at the same time keeping down the middle-age spread by frequent spade-work on the old tavern property. — J. P. M.

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